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A CENTENARY CATECHISM



THE BOARD OF SUNDAY SCHOOLS
of the
Methodist Episcopal Church
58 E. Washington St.
Chicago, Ill.

A Centenary Catechism for the Sunday School

LESSON I

1. **Question:** What is a Centenary?
Answer: A Centenary is a hundredth anniversary, or its celebration.
2. **Question:** What anniversary is marked by the Methodist Missionary Centenary?
Answer: The Methodist Missionary Centenary marks the anniversary of the organization of the "Missionary and Bible Society of the Methodist Episcopal Church."
3. **Question:** When was this Society organized?
Answer: This Society was organized in the month of April, 1819.
4. **Question:** Was this the first time that Methodists had shared in missionary work?
Answer: No. Seven years before the organization of the "Missionary and Bible Society," the General Conference had authorized the raising of money for missionary purposes, and even before this, Methodists had contributed to missionary work carried on by other organizations.
5. **Question:** Was the Methodist Episcopal Church the first church in the United States to organize its missionary work?
Answer: No. The Methodist Episcopal Church was the third church to organize its missionary work. The American Board (Congregational) was organized in 1810 and the Baptist Missionary Union in 1814.
6. **Question:** Who was John Stewart?
Answer: John Stewart was a Negro who was converted in a Methodist meeting in the year 1816, in Marietta, Ohio, and who did an important missionary work among the Wyandotte Indians in Upper Sandusky.
7. **Question:** Was John Stewart the first missionary sent out by the "Missionary and Bible Society of the Methodist Episcopal Church"?

Answer: No. It was the work of John Stewart which first attracted attention and led to the organization of that Society.

8. Question: How was John Stewart able to preach to the Wyandotte Indians?

Answer: John Stewart was able to preach to the Wyandotte Indians through the assistance of another colored man who understood the Indian language and acted as interpreter.

9. Question: How many Wyandotte Indians came out to hear Stewart preach?

Answer: The first day only one old squaw attended the service, the next day an old man also came, the third day eight or ten Indians were in attendance, and very soon they were coming in large numbers.

10. Question: How long did John Stewart work and when did he die?

Answer: John Stewart died December 17, 1823, at the age of 37, in the seventh year of his missionary labors.

LESSON II

11. Question: What change was soon made in the name and work of the "Missionary and Bible Society of the Methodist Episcopal Church"?

Answer: The words "and Bible" were omitted and the Bible program was discontinued.

12. Question: Why was this done?

Answer: This was done so that the American Bible Society might have a free field for its Bible work.

13. Question: How much money was raised for the work of the "Missionary and Bible Society" during the first year of its history?

Answer: There was raised for the work of the "Missionary and Bible Society" during the first year of its history, \$823.04.

14. Question: How much of this was expended?

Answer: There was expended during the first year, \$85.76.

15. Question: How much money did the Methodist Episcopal Church raise for home and foreign missionary work last year (1917)?

Answer: The Methodist Episcopal Church raised last year for home and foreign missions approximately \$5,300,000.

16. Question: Where did the new Missionary Society do its first work?
Answer: The first missionary of the new Society was sent to work among the French of Louisiana.
17. Question: Who was the first missionary of the new Society?
Answer: The first missionary of the new Society was the Rev. Ebenezer Brown, sent to Louisiana in 1820.
18. Question: Among what other groups did the new Society work?
Answer: The new Society worked also among the Negroes of the southern plantations, among the Welch in New York City and among the Aborigines of the wilderness.
19. Question: What great Methodist had previously done missionary work among the Indians of North America?
Answer: John Wesley had begun the evangelization of the Indians in Georgia almost a century before the Rev. Ebenezer Brown began his work.
20. Question: Was the new Society at first exclusively home missionary in character?
Answer: The work of the Society was at first entirely confined to North America, but the directors very soon began to plan for work across the seas.

LESSON III

21. Question: Was the path of the new Society during the first year of its existence a smooth one?
Answer: No. At times the outlook was very discouraging. Board members resigned and others would not attend the Board meetings. The Society would have died had it not been for a few faithful ones.
22. Question: What remark did the Rev. Joshua Soule make at one meeting when few were present and the whole outlook was gloomy?
Answer: The Rev. Joshua Soule said, "The time will come when every man who assisted in the organization of this Society and persevered in the undertaking will consider it one of the most honorable periods of his life."

23. Question: What event happened in May, 1820, which had an important effect upon the new Society?
- Answer: The General Conference met in Baltimore and formally approved the "Missionary and Bible Society of the Methodist Episcopal Church."
24. Question: What further declaration did this Conference make?
- Answer: This Conference declared, "Methodism itself is a missionary system. Yield the missionary spirit and you will yield the very lifeblood of the cause."
25. Question: How did the Missionary Society prosper financially during the early years of its history?
- Answer: During the first ten years of its history the contributions to the Missionary Society exceeded the expenditures. A balance was always reported in the treasury.
26. Question: How did the Civil War affect the gifts to missions?
- Answer: Missionary gifts increased with great rapidity during the Civil War until in 1867 it was possible for the Board to appropriate more than one million dollars for missionary work.
27. Question: What important event happened in 1907?
- Answer: The Missionary Society was divided into two separate and distinct Boards. The foreign work was placed under the Board of Foreign Missions. The home mission work was united with the work of the Board of Church Extension and placed under the Board of Home Missions and Church Extension.
28. Question: Where are the headquarters of the Board of Foreign Missions?
- Answer: The headquarters of the Board of Foreign Missions are at 150 Fifth Avenue, New York City.
29. Question: Where are the headquarters of the Board of Home Missions and Church Extension?
- Answer: The headquarters of the Board of Home Missions and Church Extension are at 1701 Arch Street, Philadelphia, Pa.

30. Question: Why were these two parts of the work divided in 1907?

Answer: They were divided so that each might be handled more efficiently.

LESSON IV

31. Question: When did the Society organized in 1819 first begin foreign missionary work?

Answer: The first foreign missionary of the new Society was sent out in 1833.

32. Question: Who was the first foreign missionary of the new Society?

Answer: The first foreign missionary of the new Society was Melville B. Cox.

33. Question: To what country did Melville B. Cox go?

Answer: Melville B. Cox went as a missionary to Liberia in Africa, where a new colony of freed slaves from America had been established.

34. Question: Did Cox organize the First Methodist Episcopal Church in Africa?

Answer: No. The first Methodist Episcopal Church in Africa was organized on shipboard by Negroes on the way from the United States to Africa—12 years before Melville B. Cox arrived in Africa.

35. Question: Does this first African Methodist Episcopal Church still survive?

Answer: This Church survives and has several branches to-day.

36. Question: Before sailing to Africa what famous conversation did Cox have with a student?

Answer: Cox said to a student, "If I die in Africa you must come over and write my epitaph."
"I will," the young man replied, "but what shall I write?"

"Write, 'Let a thousand fall before Africa be given up,' " was his grand response.

37. Question: When did Cox reach Liberia?

Answer: Cox reached Monrovia, the capital of Liberia, March 7, 1833.

38. Question: How long did Cox labor in Africa?

Answer: Cox was in Africa less than four months when he was stricken with the African fever and died.

39. Question: Was he able to accomplish very much during the short period in which he was permitted to labor in Africa?

Answer: Cox accomplished a great deal. He preached, purchased a mission house, brought the people into harmony with his plans, improved the Sunday Schools, held a camp meeting, visited the colonists in their homes, and marked out places for missionary occupation.

40. Question: Did other missionaries come to follow up the work of Melville B. Cox?

Answer: Yes. During the years 1833 to 1894, thirty-six Methodist Episcopal missionaries were sent to Liberia. Of these eight died on the field.

LESSON V

41. Question: Where is the Methodist Episcopal Church at work in Africa to-day?

Answer: The Methodist Episcopal Church has important mission stations in Liberia, throughout Central Africa and in Northern Africa.

42. Question: What is one of the outstanding religious problems in Africa to-day?

Answer: One of the outstanding problems in Africa to-day is the rapid spread of the Mohammedan religion. There are forty million Mohammedans in the northern part of Africa, and they are winning many of the eighty million natives in Central Africa to Mohammedanism because the Christian Church has not been able to supply the men and the money necessary for evangelizing Africa.

43. Question: What was the second foreign mission field to be entered by the Missionary Society?

Answer: The second foreign mission field to be entered by the Missionary Society was South America—the work being begun in Argentina by John Dempster in 1836.

44. Question: In what countries in South America is the Methodist Episcopal Church now at work?

Answer: The Methodist Episcopal Church is now at work in Argentina, Chile, Bolivia, Peru, Uruguay, and Panama.

45. Question: When did the Methodist Episcopal Church begin work in China?

- Answer: The Methodist Episcopal Church began work in China in 1847.
46. Question: For how much of China is the Methodist Episcopal Church responsible?
- Answer: The Methodist Episcopal Church is responsible in China for a territory with a population nearly as large as that of the United States.
47. Question: Is this territory adequately evangelized?
- Answer: No. There are thousands of towns and villages in this territory which have never had regular Christian services.
48. Question: What has been one of the distinguishing features of the Methodist work in China?
- Answer: One of the distinguishing features of the Methodist work in China has been the emphasis on education.
49. Question: Is there much need of educational work in China?
- Answer: Yes, there is a very great need. There are more than sixty million boys and girls of school age growing up in China without schools.
50. Question: When did the Methodist Episcopal Church undertake work in India?
- Answer: The Rev. William Butler, the first Methodist missionary to India, arrived in that country in 1856.

LESSON VI

51. Question: Was the work in India easy or difficult in those early days?
- Answer: For many years it was very difficult to get a hearing for Christianity in India and converts were few. When Bishop Thoburn went to India half a century ago, he was told that the task of converting India was like attempting to empty the ocean with a teaspoon.
52. Question: What marked change has come over the situation in India within recent years?
- Answer: The natives of India have been turning to Christianity faster than we have been able to prepare them for entrance into the Christian Church.

53. **Question:** Has it ever been necessary to refuse baptism to any of the natives of India who desired entrance into the Christian Church?
- Answer:** Last year the Methodist Episcopal Church refused to baptize one hundred and fifty thousand people in India because there was no sufficient missionary and pastoral supervision to prepare them for baptism.
54. **Question:** Are there many Christian converts under Methodist care in India to-day?
- Answer:** There are more Methodists in India to-day than there were in the entire United States in 1819 when missionary work was first undertaken.
55. **Question:** In what other countries is the Methodist Episcopal Church doing foreign mission work?
- Answer:** The Methodist Episcopal Church has important mission fields in Japan, Korea, the Philippines, Malaysia, Europe, and Mexico.
56. **Question:** Does the Methodist Episcopal Church expect to raise all the money for its foreign mission work in the United States?
- Answer:** No. The Methodist Episcopal Church insists that all converts contribute to the work in the fields in which they live. In many cases the amount given on the field far exceeds the amount appropriated by the Board.
57. **Question:** Does the Methodist Episcopal Church expect to send out enough missionaries to evangelize that part of the world for which it is responsible?
- Answer:** No. The Methodist Episcopal Church is training native evangelists who go out to preach to their own people. It requires many foreign missionaries, however, merely to educate and train native leaders in sufficient numbers to do the work of evangelization.
58. **Question:** Does that mean that the missionaries who go out from America do not do evangelistic work?
- Answer:** No. The missionaries from America do much evangelistic work but they are multiplying their own efforts by the training of these native leaders.

59. Question: Does the Methodist Episcopal Church do any other sort of work on the mission field beside distinctly evangelistic work?

Answer: Yes. The Methodist Episcopal Church conducts hospitals, dispensaries, common schools, industrial schools, and schools of higher learning.

60. Question: Why does the Methodist Episcopal Church conduct hospitals and dispensaries?

Answer: The Methodist Episcopal Church conducts hospitals and dispensaries because in many foreign fields there are no trained native doctors and because people are dying by thousands from preventable causes and suffering much unnecessary misery.

LESSON VII

61. Question: Does the medical work help the evangelistic work in any way?

Answer: Yes. Christian doctors have been able to gain the confidence of many natives who could never otherwise have been reached by the Christian message.

62. Question: Why is it necessary to establish schools?

Answer. It is necessary to establish schools that people may be taught to read the Bible and other Christian books in order that education may drive out ignorance and superstition and a permanent Christian civilization thus be established.

63. Question: For how many people is the Methodist Episcopal Church directly responsible?

Answer: The Methodist Episcopal Church is directly responsible for the evangelization of one hundred and fifty million people.

64. Question: What important event in the history of the Methodist Episcopal Church occurred in 1843 to affect the Missionary Society organized in 1819?

Answer: The Methodist Episcopal Church, South, separated from the Methodist Episcopal Church.

65. Question: What was the cause of this division?

Answer: The cause of this division was a difference of opinion concerning the question of slavery.

66. Question: Did this division seriously affect the work of the northern Missionary Board?

Answer: This division at first sadly crippled the work of the northern Board, both in men and money.

67. Question: When was the Woman's Foreign Missionary Society organized, and what does it do?

Answer: The Woman's Foreign Missionary Society was organized in 1869 and works for women in the same fields as does the Board of Foreign Missions.

68. Question: When was the Woman's Home Missionary Society organized, and what does it do?

Answer: The Woman's Home Missionary Society was organized in 1880. The most conspicuous feature of its work has been education, particularly among the Negroes, the mountain whites along the Mexican border, among the Indians, the Mexicans, the Orientals, and the natives of Alaska and Porto Rico.

69. Question: Where does the Board of Home Missions and Church Extension of the Methodist Episcopal Church do its work?

Answer: The Board of Home Missions and Church Extension is at work in all the states of the Union, together with Alaska, Porto Rico and Hawaii.

70. Question: What does the Board of Home Missions and Church Extension do?

Answer: The Board of Home Missions and Church Extension sends out home missionaries, organizes new churches, helps to construct new church buildings, to remodel old buildings and to build parsonages. It aids needy fields, trains home missionary leaders and endeavors to educate the home church concerning the needs in America.

LESSON VIII

71. Question: Into what parts is the work of the Board of Home Missions and Church Extension divided?

Answer: Some of the important divisions of the work of the Board of Home Missions and Church Extension are the following: the

rural work, the city work, the frontier work, the industrial work, the work among immigrant peoples and the work among special groups, such as the Indians, the Negroes, the Highlanders of the South, the Mormons, and the natives of Alaska, Porto Rico, and Hawaii.

72. Question: What are some of the facts concerning the relation of the Methodist Episcopal Church to the rural field?

Answer: One half the people of the United States live in the rural regions, but 87 per cent of Methodist Episcopal Churches are rural. The Methodist Episcopal Church, therefore, faces a very large rural responsibility.

73. Question: Are there boys and girls in the United States who do not have the opportunity to come to church and Sunday School?

Answer: There are thousands of boys and girls in our own land who cannot go to church or Sunday School because there are no Sunday Schools or churches near enough for them to attend.

74. Question: What are some of the needs of our great cities?

Answer: Our great cities need Christianity. They have been growing rapidly in size while in some of the most congested sections churches have been moving away. The plans of the Board of Home Missions and Church Extension include the aiding of churches in needy city fields, where otherwise the Church would be forced to close its doors.

75. Question: Is there much work to be done for the Negroes in the United States?

Answer: There are more than ten million Negroes in the United States and they are becoming scattered all over the country. There is much work to be done for them if they are to be trained in Christian living and made a blessing instead of a menace to the communities in which they are living.

76. Question: What other important home mission needs are being met by the Board of Home Missions and Church Extension?

Answer: A large work for the immigrants who come to our shore is carried on by the Board of Home Missions and Church Extension. Work is also done among numerous other special groups such as the three million Highlanders of the South and three hundred thousand Indians to be found mainly in our great West, the four hundred thousand Mormons of the West and numerous other groups.

77. Question: Why is home mission work particularly important?

Answer: Home mission work is particularly important because Christianity is on trial in America and the things which we do speak louder oftentimes than the things which our missionaries on the foreign field say.

78. Question: Is the Board of Home Missions and Church Extension attempting to train leaders who will understand how to do their work efficiently?

Answer: The Board of Home Missions and Church Extension holds institutes and various gatherings for ministers already in service, in order that they may be trained in the best ways of doing Christian work in America. It also coöperates in the training of Methodist young men and young women in colleges and state universities in order that strong leaders may be raised up for the Christian Church.

79. Question: What is the purpose of the Centenary?

Answer: The purpose of the Centenary is to lead the Methodist Episcopal Church to undertake seriously that part of the evangelization of the world for which it is primarily responsible.

80. Question: In what respect does this celebration differ from most celebrations?

Answer: The Centenary celebration of the Methodist Episcopal Church differs from most celebrations in that the attention of the Church is fixed chiefly on the future instead of on the past.

LESSON IX

81. Question: Who first ordered the celebration of the Centenary of Methodist Missions?

Answer: The celebration of a Centenary of Methodist Missions was ordered by the General Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church, which met at Saratoga Springs, New York, in 1916.

82. Question: What groups within the Church have since formally approved the plan?

Answer: The plan for the celebration of the Methodist Missionary Centenary has since been formally approved by the Board of Foreign Missions, the Board of Home Missions and Church Extension, the Board of Sunday Schools, the Board of Bishops, and various other bodies within the Church.

83. Question: What are some of the definite elements in the Centenary program?

Answer: The Centenary program includes the raising of eighty million dollars for missions in the next five years, the enlisting of the hundreds of thousands of Methodists in the Fellowship of Intercession, the securing of many new recruits for missionary work and the promotion of the practice of Christian Stewardship.

84. Question: How did the sum of eighty million dollars come to be fixed as the Centenary financial goal?

Answer: The sum of eighty million dollars was determined upon after the most careful survey of actual needs on the home and foreign mission fields.

85. Question: Is this eighty million dollars over and above what the Church is now giving to missions?

Answer: No. The eighty million dollars includes the present missionary giving.

86. Question: What is to be the culmination of the Centenary celebration?

Answer: The culmination of the Centenary celebration is to be a nation-wide gathering of Methodists in Columbus, Ohio, June 22 to July 7, 1919. In this gathering, the Metho-

dist Episcopal Church, South, the Canadian Methodist Church and other Methodist bodies will share.

87. Question: What is the relation of the Sunday School to the Centenary?

Answer: The Sunday School has taken over the raising of ten million dollars of the eighty million included in the Centenary goal and it is sharing also in all of the other phases of the Centenary program.

88. Question: How is this money to be raised in the Sunday School?

Answer: This ten million dollars is to be raised through free-will offerings from Methodist Sunday School pupils.

89. Question: What is the approved plan for a local school for raising its share of the Centenary funds?

Answer: The plan suggested for raising the Centenary funds in the Sunday School provides for a *weekly* missionary offering in the local school in which every pupil of the Sunday School shares. For this offering a special Centenary envelope has been provided.

90. Question: What educational material is prepared by The Board of Sunday Schools for use in the Sunday School during the Centenary?

Answer: The Board of Sunday Schools has prepared monthly graded missionary programs, leaflets, text books, pictures, posters and various other publications for use in the Sunday School during the Centenary years.

LESSON X

91. Question: What programs are available and how much do they cost?

Answer: Four pamphlets of programs are available, as follows: one for Young People's and Adult Departments, one for Intermediate and Senior Departments, one for Junior Departments, and one for Primary and Beginners' Departments.

The pamphlets may be secured from The Board of Sunday Schools for 5 cents each.

92. Question: Is there any material to be placed in the hands of Sunday School pupils?

Answer: Four graded leaflets have been prepared and these will be sent in quantities, free, to Sunday Schools making request and reporting the number of pupils in the various departments of the school. There are also books and other material available for all ages.

93. Question: How many missionary recruits will be necessary to carry out the enlarged work of the Church as planned by the Centenary?

Answer: The carrying out of the Centenary World Program will require during the next four years, five hundred and twenty-five annual recruits for foreign mission work, at least an equal number for home mission service and ten thousand annual recruits for special training in local church administration.

94. Question: Who is responsible for seeing that the Centenary plans are put into operation in the local school?

Answer: The Sunday School superintendent and the missionary superintendent are responsible for the success of the Centenary plans in the local Sunday School.

95. Question: What are some of the essential elements of this plan for the Sunday School?

Answer: Some of the essential elements in this Centenary plan for the Sunday School are the appointment of a missionary superintendent and committee for the local Sunday School, the formal adoption by the local Sunday School Board of the Centenary plan and of a Centenary allotment, the regular use of the graded missionary programs, an every-member canvass for missions within the school, the development of the habit of prayer for missions among the pupils and the training in service of the boys and girls in the Sunday School.

96. Question: Is it too much to expect that Methodist Sunday School pupils will contribute two million dollars per year to missions?

Answer: Two million dollars per year for missions is not too much to expect from Methodist Sunday School pupils, for there are so many

pupils that if each one gave one cent per week the total for the year would exceed two million dollars.

97. Question: To what agencies does the missionary money given in the Sunday School go?

Answer: The missionary money given in the Sunday School is divided as follows:
45% for the Board of Foreign Missions
45% for the Board of Home Missions and Church Extension
10% for the Board of Sunday Schools.

98. Question: Is it expected that the boys and girls will limit their missionary giving to one cent per week?

Answer: No. There will be some who will not give their proportion, small though that proportion may be, for the missionary work of the Church, and some pupils must, therefore, give much more than one cent per week if the two million dollars is to be raised.

99. Question: When will those who are responsible for the Centenary plans in the Sunday School be satisfied?

Answer: Those who are responsible for the Centenary plans in the Sunday School will be satisfied only when every pupil in every Methodist Sunday School is learning something about missions each week, is praying regularly for missions and missionaries, is engaging in some sort of service in the community in which he lives and is giving regularly each week to the world-wide work of the Church.

100. Question: What will be the reward of those who take part in this program?

Answer: The reward of those who take part in this program will be the satisfaction of knowing that they are having a share in a program which reaches to the ends of the earth and which is carrying hope and joy and freedom and opportunity to many who live in our own land and in far distant lands and who, to-day, do not have a fair chance at the good things of life.

